231
433 the young reindeer are processed for leather and as wild leather (chamois leather) are a product in demand for export.

Hunting

•224 The valuable fur-bearing animals, once so numerous, have almost completely disappeared from the settled areas and have withdrawn into the inaccessible wastelands. And, nevertheless, the Far Eastern region with its vast, wild forests is still, even today, a grateful empire of hunters. Approximately a third of the furs acquired in the Soviet Union are won in the Far East. Transbaykal is not so active in this. Squirrels and foxes provide the bulk of the skins ; the sable has been completely exterminated in wide stretches of land and is now only rarely encountered. In the tundra region the Polar fox is the most important animal hunted. /133/ The number of large wild animals has also been heavily decimated by the earlier rapacious hunting. The spotted stag /Fleckenhirsch/, sought because of its "Panten" /unhardened antlers/ and formerly very numerous in the Amur and Ussuri region, occurs now only very rarely in the open hunting ground and is kept today only in animal parks in the Sikhote-Alin'; of these seven are known with several thousand stags. For the protection of the plant and animal world rather large areas in the Sikhote-Alin', on Kamchatka, and on Lake Baykal have been declared nature protection areas.

Hunting for fur-bearing animals is organized by the state and is done from numerous "bases, " where the hunter receives not only his hunting equipment but also other necessities of life, and then goes out to hunt in cadres. In their hunting, these state hunters have to follow fixed instructions, varying from place to place, for the sparing and preservation of the wild life. At the end of the hunting period the skins are delivered to the bases, and the hunter is paid according to his output.

Fishing and Hunting of Sea Animals

226 In Transbaykal, which lies inland, fishing has only a subordinate role. Apart from small lakes, which are, however, rich in fish, the fishing practised professionally is concentrated on Lake Baykal. Its outstanding fish is the omul (Coregonus omul Pall.), a type of salmon, [255] whose spawn is bred and set out. Some fish canning factories in various ooo localities on the coast process the catch not used locally. Not insignicant

The coasts are rocky and steep and are torn up into adventurous, picturesque forms by the heavy breakers. Thus the coasts project a romantic-dim picture in the fog. Thousands of birds make their home on the rocks. 133

The Commander Islands have become famous for the catching of sea otters (seals) there, but this wealth is almost completely destroyed today. The 600 inhabitants, which consist of a mixture of Aleuts, Russians, Eskimos, Kurils, etc., live almost exclusively from what the sea offers them. On the land itself foxes are hunted. 225 161 224

The Kurils

The island garland of the Kurils came to the Soviet Union after the end of World War II. These islands are not too well known, and therefore somewhat more space is to be devoted to them. 133

The Kurils, along with Hokkaido and Kamchatka, form the most northerly arc of the outer frame of the east Asiatic continent. The Kurils represent a connection between the volcanic massif of Hokkaido Island and the volcanos of Kamchatka. To the island chain belong 36 islands which are larger in terms of area, 20 smaller islands, and many uninhabitable rocks, which often barely project from the sea. According to the local division of the islands, the Kurils can be divided into a 1,200 kilometer long main chain, which begins in the north with Shimushu Island and ends with Kunashiri Island off Hokkaido, and into a second, parallel chain, which, however, is only approximately 100 kilometers long. This shorter chain begins at Hokkaido with Nemuro Island, stops with Shikotan Island, and lies east of the main chain. The entire area of the Kurils is given at 15,600 square kilometers, of which 40 percent is on the four largest islands, namely Etorofu, Paramushiru, Kunashiri, and Uruppu. The most northerly island in the chain, whose name is Araito, lies under 50° 56' N latitude, while the most sourtherly lies under 43° 26' N. The Kurils, therefore, lie approximately at the latitude between Leningrad and Burgas in Bulgaria.

/304/ The understructure of the Kurils rises like a mountain ridge from the floor of the sea, whose highest parts project beyond the surface of the water as islands. The slope of this submarine ridge has various forms. Toward the Sea of Okhotsk it declines relatively steeply to a depth of 3,000 meters (the greatest depth is 3,374 meters). The slope toward the Pacific is bigger, for here the Kuril deep sea